



Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor • Chuck Hartke, Director

Bureau of Land and Water Resources

State Fairgrounds • P.O. Box 19281 • Springfield, IL 62794-9281 • 217/782-6297 • TDD 217/524-6858 • Fax 217/557-0993

September 25, 2003

Ms. Gail Clingerman
U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island
ATTN: Economic and Environmental Analysis Branch
Clock Tower Building - P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004

Re: IWW LaGrange Pool
Beardstown Sediment Trap
Potential Mitigation Sites Alternatives
Cass County, Illinois

Dear Ms. Clingerman:

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) has examined the above-referenced project for its potential impact to agricultural land in order to determine its compliance with the Illinois Farmland Preservation Act (505 ILCS 75/1 et seq.). Our analysis also relates to the federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC 4201 et seq.), which specifies that federal actions affecting farmland conversion shall be consistent with state and local programs to protect farmland.

Previous June 3, 2003 Corps correspondence described a compensatory mitigation proposal to preserve approximately 2 acres of existing wetlands within the City of Beardstown. The proposal was to compensate for approximately 0.25 acres of wetland impacts associated with the dredging of a pilot channel to move dredged material from the sediment trap to the proposed placement site. The Corps of Engineers has since determined that up to 0.5 acre of wetlands will be impacted through construction of the pilot channel, and alternate compensatory mitigation sites have been identified.

Mitigation Site 1 is the preservation site previously coordinated; however, the site is no longer available. The new preferred alternative, Site 2, is located within Beardstown corporate boundaries. The proposal involves the construction of an approximately 0.5 acre shallow open water area within an isolated wetland currently dominated by Reed Canary Grass.

Because the site does not involve Prime or Important soils, the IDA does not object to the use of Site 2. We have determined that its use complies with the Illinois Farmland Preservation Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Frank", is written over a faint, larger signature.

Steve Frank, Chief
Bureau of Land and Water Resources

SF:TS

cc: Agency Project File



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way • Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
<http://dnr.state.il.us>

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

Joel Brunsvold, Director

October 1, 2003

Mr. Kenneth A. Barr, Chief
Economic and Environmental Analysis Branch
Rock Island District, Corps of Engineers
Clock Tower Building, P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004

Attn: Gail Clingerman

Dear Mr. Barr:

Reference is made to your agency's proposal to excavate a sediment trap and pilot channel on the Illinois River to capture sediment discharged by the Sangamon River. The project is located at Illinois River mile 88.9, left bank, in Sections 10 and 11, Township 18 North, Range 12 West, at Beardstown, Cass County, Illinois.

Representatives of the Department of Natural Resources recently met on site with staff of the Rock Island District and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to inspect and discuss the alternative mitigation sites that were identified in your September 10, 2003 letter. The subject letter indicates that approximately 1/2 acre of wetland will be impacted by construction rather than 1/4 acre as was initially anticipated, and that the wetland loss will be compensated by the creation of 1/2 acre of new wetland at mitigation site 2 or 3. Site 1 has been dropped from consideration because the land is no longer available.

Based on the field inspection, Site 2 was judged to be unacceptable. This site is an isolated wetland with no apparent surface connection to nearby waters, and it is bordered on two sides by actively-traveled roads that would likely foster high mortality among animals (possibly including the threatened Illinois chorus frog) that might use it for breeding, foraging, or other purposes. It was generally agreed among the participants that Site 3 would be a better choice since it abuts an area where your agency has been actively developing ephemeral breeding ponds for the chorus frog.

The Department recommends that mitigation for the sediment trap and pilot channel be performed by creating additional ephemeral breeding habitat at Site 3. The mitigation should be done at a greater than 1:1 ratio since the overall project will likely result in at least a short term reduction in wetland functional values. We understand that 0.4 acres of wetland will actually be impacted and propose a 2:1 mitigation ratio, or 0.8 acres of mitigation. We further recommend that the 0.8 acres be distributed among four or more individual breeding ponds with slightly different bottom elevations to maximize habitat diversity during varying hydrological conditions.

IDNR biologists are available to discuss these recommendations further with your involved staff at their convenience. Please contact me at 217-785-4863 if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Schanzle
Permit Program Manager
Office of Realty and Environmental Planning

RWS:rs

cc: IDNR/ORC (Kruse, Carney, Kelley), IDNR/OWR (Kennedy), IEPA (Yurdin), IDOA (Savko),
USFWS (McPeck), USEPA (Fenedick)



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

OCT 03 2003

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

B-19J

October 3, 2003

Ms. Gail Clingerman
Economic and Environmental Analysis Branch
Department of the Army
Rock Island District Corps of Engineers
Clock Tower Building - P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, Illinois 81204-2004

Re: Beardstown Sediment Trap Potential Mitigation Site Alternatives

Dear Ms. Clingerman:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed a letter from Kenneth Barr of your offices dated September 10, 2003. The purpose of this document was to notify relevant parties of a need for a new sediment trap at the mouth of the Sangamon River near Beardstown, Illinois, and the identification of three mitigation sites to compensate for approximately ½ acre of wetlands to be impacted through construction activities. Our comments in this letter are provided pursuant to NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

Pursuant to our review of the letter and attached map, we feel the issue of wetland mitigation and State-threatened Illinois Chorus Frogs (ICF) is intertwined at this location. In particular, we feel the selection of Mitigation Site 3 as the preferred site provides several advantages. First, ICFs are already established at existing frog ponds adjacent to Mitigation Site 3. Second, Mitigation Site 3 is currently part of the Conservation Reserve Program and devoid of roads. Lastly, the purchase of land in the northern half of Mitigation Site 3 would increase the number of ICF breeding ponds by providing additional wet habitat and a good opportunity for ICFs to colonize small, shallow depressions. In addition, if the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) purchased sandy upland habitat located in the southern half of Mitigation Site 3, ICFs would have burrowing habitat, thus providing suitable habitat for their entire life cycle. If the purchase of upland and wetland habitat within Mitigation Site 3 is not feasible at this time, the Corps should pursue the development of a conservation easement; the two habitat types and the ICFs would have a buffer from possible development or a return to agricultural production.

The EPA feels Mitigation Site 3 should be further developed as the preferred site in the forthcoming Environmental Assessment (EA). We feel utilization of existing habitat types and continuity would be a better mitigation opportunity than Mitigation Site 2 which the Corps has identified as the preferred alternative. Per our conversations earlier this week, the characteristics of Mitigation Site 2 (i.e., open water with a reed canary grass perimeter surrounded by roads and a parking lot) are not suitable as ICF habitat. The Corps may wish to explore other sites not currently under consideration to provide suitable habitat for this State-threatened species.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this issue. Inclusion of the above information in the EA would facilitate a quicker review and approval of this mitigation project. Please send a copy of the EA to me when it has been finalized. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Kathleen Kowal of my staff at (312) 353-5206.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake", written in a cursive style.

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief
Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch

cc: Craig McPeck, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Rock Island Field Office
4469 48th Avenue Court
Rock Island, Illinois 61201
Phone: (309) 793-5800 Fax: (309) 793-5804



IN REPLY REFER
TO:

FWS/RIFO

October 8, 2003

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Rock Island District
ATTN: PM-A (Gail Clingerman)
Clock Tower Building, P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004

Dear Ms. Clingerman:

This letter responds to the coordination request letter for the sediment trap and pilot channel to be dredged out of an approximate 7.2 acre area of the Illinois Waterway near Beardstown in La Grange Pool, Cass County, Illinois, which was received in our office on September 12, 2003. Specifically, this letter is in reference to the mitigation alternatives which were outlined in that letter.

A biologist from this office met with staff of the Rock Island District and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on September 29, 2003, to inspect and discuss the alternative mitigation sites that were identified in the September 10, 2003 letter. Based on site inspections and agency discussions, Site #1 is no longer available as mitigation and Site #2 is judged to be unacceptable. Although Site #2 is identified as the recommended alternative, it offers very little opportunity as wetland mitigation, in respect to both function and quality. This site is hydraulically isolated from all surrounding wetland complexes and appears to provide very little characteristic wetland habitat (dominated by reed canary grass). The site is also surrounded on three sides by well traveled roadways and on the fourth side is a parking lot. These surfaces make this site unattractive in that reptiles and amphibians attempting to use this site have increased likelihood of being killed while traveling into and out of the site.

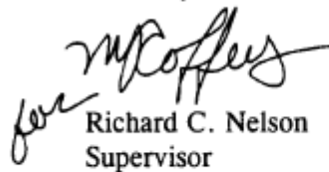
However, Site #3 appears to be a very plausible choice and its use is supported by both the DNR biologists and us. Site #3 offers a unique proximity to pre-existing Illinois chorus frog mitigation ponds and could be used to expand and/or increase the habitat potential of this site for the benefit of this state threatened amphibian.

The September 10 letter from your office also identifies that approximately one-half an acre of wetlands will be impacted through the construction of the pilot channel and that the recommended mitigation plan calls for the construction of a half- acre wetland. Wetland

mitigation often requires an extended period of time before it fully matures and can compare in similar habitat as that destroyed. For this reason the Service recommends that the wetland impacts be mitigated at a 2:1 ratio. We understand that 0.4 acres of wetland will actually be impacted and therefore recommend that a minimum of 0.8 acres of wetland mitigation be constructed at Site #3.

This letter provides comment under the authority of and in accordance with provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended: 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Questions regarding this letter or our availability for review of the mitigation plan and/or the environmental assessment may be directed to Mr. Kraig McPeck at (309) 793-5800, ext. 210.

Sincerely,


for Richard C. Nelson
Supervisor

cc: IL DNR (Schanzle)
US EPA (Kowal)

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